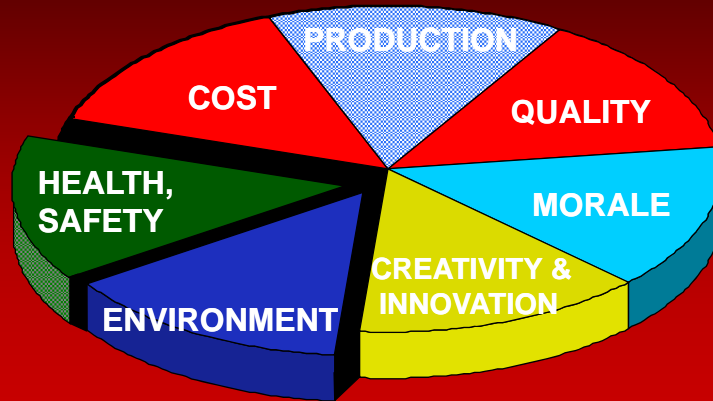# INDIANA SAFETY CONFERNCE

Reducing the Fear of Reporting
EHS Incidents and Injuries
(Or Preventing Fear in the Workplace)

2/20/14

Michael Topf MA

Topf Initiatives

Reducing the Fear of Reporting
## EHS Incidents and Injuries

PURPOSE

- **Explore the role of Fear and related Stress in causing accidents, injuries, health issues and environmental incidents.**
- **Determine the primary sources of Fear and Stress that affect us in and out of the workplace.**
- **Learn how Fear and Stress contribute to non-reporting of incidents.**
- **Introduce effective strategies to counteract the negative effects of Fear and Stress on EHS performance and encourage reporting of incidents.**

TO ACHIEVE EHS OBJECTIVES HAVE NUMERICAL GOALS (i.e. 0 INCIDENTS) BEEN SET (Mandated?) TO REDUCE INJURIES OR INCIDENTS?
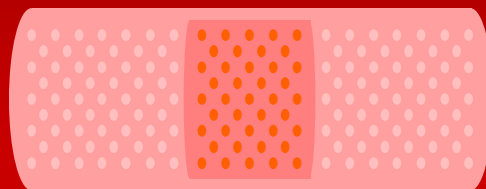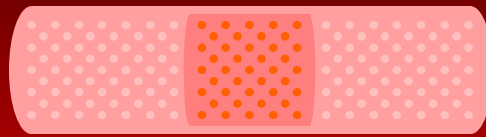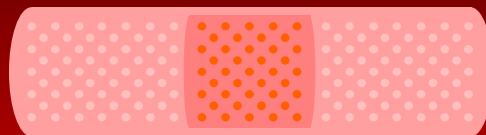
What's the Result?

• Fear?

• Stress?

• Cover-up?

SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES AND REPORT INCIDENTS IN HUMAN TERMS!

OUR GOAL IS TO PREVENT OUR VALUED EMPLOYEES FROM BEING INJURED!

OUR GOAL IS TO INSURE THAT EVERY EMPLOYEE IS HEALTHY AND SAFE AND WE PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT!

IS ZERO INCIDENTS A WORTHY OBJECTIVE?

- IF SO, THEN USE IT "TO GO FOR"!

- SUPPORT EACH OTHER, DON'T BE CRITICAL OR JUDGE EACH OTHER!!

To Reach Our Goals for Our Health, Safety and Well-being…..

- WE NEED TO LOOK DEEPER INTO THE CAUSES OF & SOLUTIONS TO PREVENT EHS INCIDENTS!!
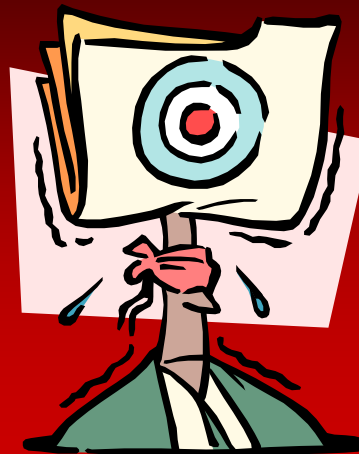
Our Research Suggests that:

- ✉ *Human Factors* = most incidents.
- ✉ Attitudes and behaviors of both management & line employees. Corporate & Site.

Automatic, Non - Deliberate Behaviors

- Daydreaming
- Distractions
- Inattention
- Fear/Stress
- Fatigue

Past History
Role of fear and stress unknown or downplayed.
-Focus on observable behaviors-
Not the complete picture!

CHANGE

WHAT DO YOU HEAR
(Your Little Voice Says)
WHEN I SAY CHANGE?
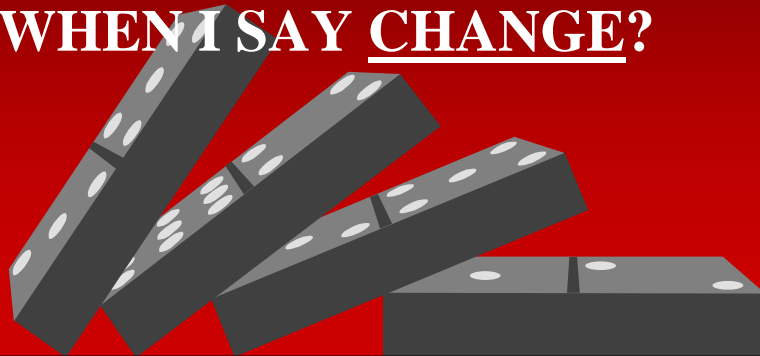
WHO'S THE ONLY PERSON WHO LOVES CHANGE?

A WET BABY!!!!

CHANGES IN INDUSTRY TODAY ARE NUMEROUS

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF ALL THE CHANGES?

*YOURSELF?

*YOUR CO-WORKERS?

*ON H, S & E PERFORMANCE?

CHANGE CREATES "FEAR"

➢ Great agitation and anxiety caused by the expectation or realization of danger

Synonyms:

terror, horror, panic, alarm, dread fright, consternation, trepidation

Sources of Fear and Stress!

*Deregulation, acquisitions, mergers,
*Downsizing,   *Re-structuring
*Production   *Dissatisfied customers,
 pressures/quotas,   *Re-engineering,
*Internal & external   *World politics,
 competition,   *Incentives,
*The future,   *Personal issues
*Personality conflicts,
*Job security,
*Work conditions
 & environment,
*The economy,
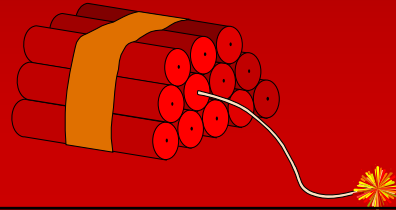
Fear & Stress Create Distractions & Health Problems
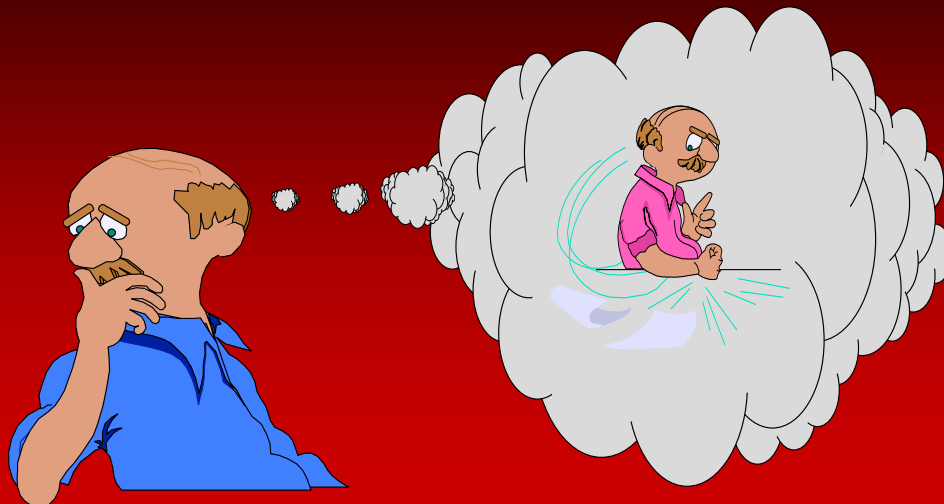
Premeditated, Deliberate Behaviors

- Calculated Risk Taking-Conscious Choices
- Short Cuts
- Non Conformance
    - Time, comfort
    - Convenience, fear
    - "Looking Good"
    - Money/lack of safeguards
- Conflicting priorities

Consequences of
FEAR & STRESSORS from any source!

- Effects PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, & SPIRITUAL Levels! Look for "Quick Fixes"!

- Burn-out, muscle tension, fatigue, nervous, depression, loss of self-esteem and faith, helpless, weakness, and on & on!

- Cancer, heart disease, sprains & strains, skin disorders, high blood pressure, drug and alcohol dependency, accidents and incidents!

- Problems with inter-personal relationships!

- Violence & Road Rage!
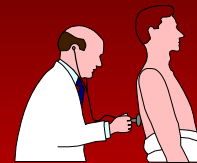
WHAT IS "FEAR"?

➢ Great agitation and anxiety caused by the expectation or realization of danger

Synonyms:

terror, horror, panic, alarm, dread
fright, consternation, trepidation

CONTINUING & INCREASING ROLE

Today, more than ever, Fear and Stress from various sources play a continuing and increasing role in health, safety and environmental performance!

Attention and effective interventions are needed!

When people
do not have certainty
about <u>Expectations</u> and
<u>Consequences</u>
THEY MAKE STUFF UP!

Do we make up positive stuff or
negative stuff?

F * E * A * R

- ✓ F = FUTURE / FANTASY
- ✓ E = EXPECTATIONS
- ✓ A = APPEARING
- ✓ R = REAL

F * E * A * R

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The "UNDISCUSSABLES"

A problem or issue that people hesitate to talk about with those who are important to its resolution.

CAUTION

THE BIGGEST ISSUES

Management Practices   **Co-Worker Performance**

Fear and Stress at work is on the rise!

- Think their workload excessive.
- Often bothered by excessive job pressure.
- Frequently worried about being laid off.
- Worry a lot about company's future.
- Feel job is more secure if perform well. (Won't report incidents!)

Factors Contributing to a "FEAR" Environment

- ✓ <u>Culture, norms:</u> past practices, beliefs, values, personal experiences
- ✓ <u>Folkways:</u> stories passed on informally
- ✓ <u>Generalizations:</u> isolated incidents come to be regarded as universals
- ✓ <u>Poor Skills:</u> ineffectively handled situations
- ✓ <u>Inconsistency:</u> policies are applied variably
- ✓ <u>Lack of open communication:</u> not willing or able to listen to each other

Factors Contributing to a "FEAR" Environment

- ✓ <u>Punishment-based systems:</u> blanket punitive policies and practices.
- ✓ <u>Adversarial relationships:</u> ongoing conflict between management / labor / departments etc.
- ✓ <u>Attitudes and behaviors of management:</u> negative communications and conflicting priorities. Poor handling of incidents.

We are Afraid to Lose

REAL SURVIVAL ISSUES COME INTO PLAY

- ✓ **Credibility & Reputation:** no one wants to be a trouble maker or boat rocker
- ✓ **Career & Financial Advancement:** loss of advancement, reduced job security, loss of rewards and incentives
- ✓ **Relationships:** disapproval and stress from peers and the boss
- ✓ **Employment:** lots of change / younger leave, older may not want to leave

We are Afraid to Lose

REAL SURVIVAL ISSUES COME INTO PLAY

- ✓ **Interpersonal rejection:** disliked as a result of speaking up, not fitting in the organization, shunned by others.
- ✓ **Changes in job role:** choice assignments are given to others.
- ✓ **Embarrassment:** humiliated or diminished in front of others – both superiors and peers.

CONSEQUENCES
SUSTAIN OR EXTINQUISH
BEHAVIOR

- ✓ **Fear of repercussions is a barrier to participation between management and labor**
- ✓ **Fear destroys trust**
- ✓ **Fear generates negativity, anger and frustration.**
- ✓ **Depletes pride, undermines quality, productivity and innovation.**
- ✓ **Undertone keeps both individuals and organizations from being fully expressive. (Report incidents)**

What Doesn't Work

- ✓ **Being critical – especially in front of others**
- ✓ **"Inquisitions"**
- ✓ **Chastisement for injuries (formal and informal)**
- ✓ **Threats**
- ✓ **Insults or put-downs**
- ✓ **Blaming**
- ✓ **Telling rather than asking**
- ✓ **Lack of feedback on suggestions and comments**

Create a Safe Work Environment:

✓ free from danger, injury, hazard, peril or the threat of harm

Safety:

✓ the quality or state of being safe

Managing Perceptions:

✓ The FEAR of repercussions whether real or imagined is REAL to people
✓ People believe and hold their perceptions to be true
✓ What people think and feel are at the root
✓ To be effective you must listen to hear peoples' concerns
✓ Hold for the truth and keep balanced

TO CREATE A BREAKTHROUGH!!

- ADDRESSING BEHAVIORS IS JUST NOT ENOUGH!
- NEED TO ADDRESS THE ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND THINKING THAT UNDERLIE THE BEHAVIORS.

- WHAT PEOPLE ARE TELLING THEMSELVES ABOUT HOW THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES/SITUATIONS ARE.

KEY-CREATE A LEARNING ORGANIZATION

- LEARNING TO SURVIVE!
- INCLUDES HEALTH & SAFETY!
- EITHER REACTIVE or GENERATIVE!
- LEADERSHIP & PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ARE KEY!! Management & Labor Employees!
- ADDRESS KEY ISSUES/BARRIERS! THE SOURCES OF FEAR AND STRESS!
- MAKE IT HAPPEN NOT LET IT HAPPEN!!

ASSESS-FEAR IN YOUR ORGANIZATION!

- WHAT ARE PEOPLE AFRAID OF?
- WHAT EXISTS THAT SUPPORTS A FEAR CULTURE? CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE? JOBS?
- ARE PEOPLE AFRAID TO BRING UP UNSAFE CONDITIONS? IF SO, WHY?
- ARE PEOPLE AFRAID TO REPORT INCIDENTS? IF SO, WHY?
- HOW DOES FEAR AFFECT YOUR CULTURE AND PRODUCTIVITY?

Look for the signs of fear & stress! (Management & Line)

- Non-compliance with PPE
- Decline in job performance
- Sloppy work habits
- Poor housekeeping
- Mood change-Irritable, quarrelsome
- Frequently distracted, low energy
- Drug & alcohol use
- Uncooperative & Negative

Constructive Communication
(Being non-critical)

1. Be aware of your "potential" for a negative reaction to an incident.
2. Count to "10".
3. See the person "behind" the behavior.
4. Make a choice to "be neutral"
5. Use the "Don't get Defensive" symbol ("time out T")
6. Ask for information re: what happened. Listen!
7. Ask how the incident/situation could be prevented and what support they need.
8. Thank the person for the information.

Use
Praise or Acknowledgement (often)

1. Praise as soon as you observe safe behaviors or contributions for improvement or if someone reports an incident.
2. Ask to interrupt
3. Announce intentions
4. Private vs. Public
5. Be specific
6. Tell the person you appreciate what they did.
7. Let them know their action is important to safe, healthy and environmentally sound performance. Give the big picture.
8. Pause for a moment to let them feel good.
9. Thank and encourage them to do more of the same.
10. Hand shake, if appropriate.

What Are Your Priorities?

- Are you developing effective strategies to deal with change, fear & stress, as well as, how to encourage reporting of incidents?

- Are you resourcing the time you need?

- Is your management resourcing the time you need?

- If not, how can you get the support you need?

Holistic Approach

- Multiple Methods = Raise Awareness
- Change Unsafe Attitudes, Beliefs, Thinking & Behaviors
- Provide Skills to: Focus and Pay Attention
                       Manage Fear and Reduce Stress
- Identify and Correct Workplace Hazards and Sources of Fear and Stress
- Learn from incidents
- Create a Continuous Improvement Structure
- INCLUDE ALL LEVELS OF EMPLOYEES

Leadership Strategies: Reducing Fear & Stress!

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY:

PREVENT/REDUCE STRESSORS ON EMPLOYEES!

- PROVIDE RESOURCES TO: Improve unsafe/unhealthy conditions/environment, eliminate fumes, noise, dust, poor equipment, crowded areas, etc.

WHAT TO DO? (con't)

- Hire out-placement services when downsizing.
- Provide EAP services for work and personal problems.
- Involve employees in identifying and solving unsafe and unworkable situations/conditions.
- Give people control and power to make changes. (make sure the structure works!!!)
- Provide leadership, management and interpersonal skill training. C&C.

(more) WHAT TO DO? (con't)

- Insure incentive systems/quotas are not supporting unsafe behaviors, fear and stress!

- Acknowledge what is working, safe behaviors and contributions!

- Get upper management/corporate support and resources to improve unsafe and/or stressful situations/circumstances!

- Have frequent communication meetings related to changes in the organization. Tell people the truth!!

(more, more) WHAT TO DO? (con't)

- Train accident/incident investigation teams to handle incidents constructively.
- Provide holistic self-management skills to all employees.
  - Stress reduction & relaxation
  - Physical fitness
  - Nutrition
  - Time management
  - Self-observation/management
  - Assertiveness training
  - Conflict resolution skills

AND FINALLY!!!!!

- Take Care Of Yourself
  And Your Loved Ones!!!

- Relax-Take Long, Slow,
 Deep Breaths!!!

- Have Fun!!! Learn To Play!!!
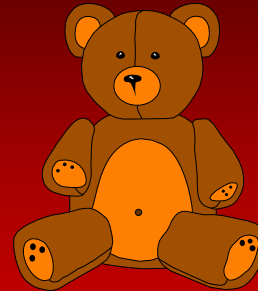
STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

- THINK ABOUT 2-3 ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE AT WORK RELATED TO:
  - WHAT STRATEGIES YOU CAN IMPLEMENT TO HELP YOURSELF DEAL WITH FEAR AND STRESS.
  - WHAT STRATEGIES YOU CAN IMPLEMENT TO HELP OTHERS (CO-WORKERS, FAMILY, ETC.) DEAL WITH FEAR AND STRESS.
  - WHAT STRATEGIES YOU CAN IMPLEMENT TO ENCOURAGE REPORTING OF INCIDENTS.
  - WHAT IS ONE ACTION STEP YOU WILL COMMIT YOURSELF TO TAKING AT WORK?
  - SHARE THIS ACTION WITH SOMEONE WHO WILL SUPPORT YOU IN KEEPING YOUR COMMITMENT.

Commitment is what transforms a promise into a reality. It is the words that speak boldly of your intentions, and actions which speak louder than words. It is making the time when there is none. Coming through time after time, year after year.

Commitment is the stuff character is made of; the power to change the face of things. It is the daily triumph of integrity over skepticism.

Reducing the Fear of Reporting EHS Incidents and Injuries

PRODUCTION
COST
QUALITY
HEALTH, SAFETY
MORALE
ENVIRONMENT
CREATIVITY & INNOVATION
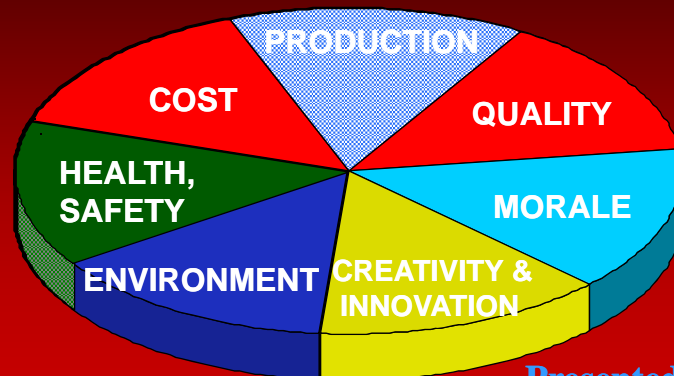
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